

What is claimed is:

1. A computerized method comprising:
 - initiating a telephone session, said telephone session operable to receive input signals and send output voice signals;
 - providing a personal identification number (PIN), said personal identification number identifying one or more user identifications for one or more instant messaging (IM) clients; and
 - converting text data from the one or more instant messaging clients to output voice signals.
2. The computerized method of claim 1, further comprising providing an online status for the one or more instant messaging clients to the telephone session.
- 15 3. The computerized method of claim 1, wherein the input signals are voice signals;
4. The computerized method of claim 3, further comprising converting the voice signals to text data and sending the text data to the one or more instant messaging clients.
- 20 5. The computerized method of claim 3, further comprising recognizing the voice signals as instant messaging commands;
6. The computerized method of claim 1, wherein the input signals comprise keypad strokes.
- 25 7. The computerized method of claim 6, further comprising converting the keypad strokes signals to alphanumeric data and transmitting the alphanumeric data to the one or more instant messaging clients.
- 30 8. The computerized method of claim 6, further comprising converting the keypad strokes to instant messaging commands.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the one or more instant messaging clients includes instant messaging clients selected from the group comprising AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo Instant Messaging, ICQ, and MSN instant messaging.

5 10. The method of claim 1, wherein an instant messaging server is operable to receive said input signals and send said output voice signals.

11. A system for providing instant messaging, the system comprising:
an input module operable to receive input from a telephone;
10 a PIN management module operable to receive PIN data, said PIN data identifying an IM user;
an IM client module operable to establish an IM session with an IM client identified by the IM user; and
a text to speech module operable to convert text data to speech data for output to
15 the telephone.

12. The system of claim 11 wherein the input module includes a keypad input module for receiving keypad data from the telephone.

20 13. The system of claim 11 wherein the input module includes a speech to text module for receiving voice data from the telephone and converts the voice data to text data for output through the IM client module.

25 14. The system of claim 11, further comprising a PIN database operable to maintain data mapping a PIN to an IM user identification.

15. A computer-readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing a method, the method comprising:
initiating a telephone session, said telephone session operable to receive input
30 signals and send output voice signals;

providing a personal identification number (PIN), said personal identification number identifying one or more user identifications for one or more instant messaging (IM) clients; and

5 converting text data from the one or more instant messaging clients to output voice signals.

16. The computer-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the method further comprises providing an online status for the one or more instant messaging clients to the telephone session.

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17. The computer-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the input signals are voice signals;

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18. The computer-readable medium of claim 17, wherein the method further comprises converting the voice signals to text data and sending the text data to the one or more instant messaging clients.

19. The computer-readable medium of claim 17, wherein the method further comprises recognizing the voice signals as instant messaging commands;

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20. The computer-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the input signals comprise keypad strokes.

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21. The computer-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the method further comprises converting the keypad strokes signals to alphanumeric data and transmitting the alphanumeric data to the one or more instant messaging clients.

22. The computer-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the method further comprises converting the keypad strokes to instant messaging commands.

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23. The computer-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the one or more instant messaging clients includes instant messaging clients selected from the group comprising AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo Instant Messaging, ICQ, and MSN instant messaging.

5 24. The computer-readable medium of claim 15, wherein an instant messaging server is operable to receive said input signals and send said output voice signals.

25. An instant messaging client system comprising:
an instant message (IM) client module; and
10 a proximity detector communicably coupled to the IM client module and operable to:

detect a change in the presence of an IM client user;
update an IM client status in accordance with the change in presence.

15 26. The instant message client system of claim 25, wherein the proximity detector includes an RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) detector.

27. The instant message client system of claim 25, wherein the proximity detector includes an ultrasonic detector.

20 28. The instant message client system of claim 25, wherein the proximity detector includes an infrared detector.

25 29. The instant message client system of claim 25, wherein the IM client module is selected from the group consisting of selected from the group comprising AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo Instant Messaging, ICQ, and MSN instant messaging.

30 30. A method for maintaining an IM client status, the method comprising:
detecting a change in proximity of a user of an IM client; and
updating an IM client status in accordance with the change in proximity.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein detecting the change in proximity includes detecting that the user has come within a range of a proximity detector.
 32. The method of claim 30, wherein detecting the change in proximity includes
5 detecting that the user has exited a range of a proximity detector.
 33. The method of claim 30, wherein detecting the change in proximity includes determining a lack of activity on an input device.
- 10 34. The method of claim 33, wherein determining a lack of activity includes determining a lack of activity for a predetermined timeout period.
35. The method of claim 30, wherein detecting the change in proximity includes determining the resumption of activity on an input device.

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